COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 6-15(3) TABLED ON JUN 1 2004

Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly

Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight

Report on Priorities and Objectives

Chair: Mr. Kevin Menicoche

MEMBERS OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON ACCOUNTABILITY AND OVERSIGHT

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Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly
Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight

JUN 1 2004

SPEAKER OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Mr. Speaker:

Your Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight is pleased to provide its Report on the Committee's priorities and objectives and commends it to the House.

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Chairperson

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STANDING COMMITTEE ON ACCOUNTABILITY AND OVERSIGHT REPORT ON PRIORITIES AND OBJECTIVES

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INTRODUCTION

The Members of the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight held a two-day operational planning workshop in Deline on April 14 and 15, 2004. The purpose of the workshop was to review the Committee's mandate and to develop an approach to how Members will carry it out over the life of this Assembly.

The Committee agreed to maintain its existing terms of reference, as outlined in the *Rules of the Legislative Assembly,* and adopted the following vision and mission statements:

VISION

Our vision is a strong, effective consensus government that has the confidence of the people of the NWT.

MISSION

Our mission will be to take purposeful and unified action, where appropriate, to support, question or oppose government initiatives and to hold government accountable. We will also use our collective power to influence government to take action and/or to change its policies when in the public interest.

PRIORITIES AND OBJECTIVES

In the course of our workshop, Members identified a number of priorities and objectives we want to address during our term. We expect that some of these items will be pursued more directly by the Standing Committee on Governance and Economic Development and the Standing Committee on Social Programs in keeping with the mandates of those committees. This is of course only an initial list that will need to be revised to meet changing needs and circumstances.

As Committee Members were also active participants in developing the 15th Assembly vision and goals, that document reflects many of the items we discussed, such as ensuring that northerners benefit from resource development, completing Aboriginal land, resource and self-government agreements, clear, accountable and efficient governance structures, and adequate, affordable and accessible housing for residents.

One of our key priorities will therefore be to hold the Government accountable to our collective 15th Assembly vision and goals.

Other, more specific objectives we plan to pursue are:

- Restructuring of the GNWT's internal human resource services to provide a more efficient and accountable system
- A reconsideration of past reports and recommendations on the GNWT's *Affirmative Action Policy*
- Division of the Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development
- A review of all GNWT boards and agencies
- A review of the operations and mandate of the NWT Housing Corporation, including the rent scales for social housing
- An operational review of the Workers' Compensation Board, and completion of the amendments to the legislation
- Consideration of new legislation to protect whistleblowers
- Consideration of new fiscal responsibility legislation
- A review of the *Liquor Act*
- A review of the *Residential Tenancies Act*
- A cost/benefit analysis of the Business Incentive Policy
- Improving the land transfer process, and in particular accelerating land transfers to municipalities
- Increased investment in early childhood development programs
- Equal access to student financial assistance for trades students and persons with disabilities
- Increased investment in trades and apprenticeship programs
- Introduction of measures to mitigate the impacts of past hydro developments
- Development of a hydro project on the Bear River
- Construction of an all-weather road between Tuktoyaktuk and Inuvik
- Consideration of a logo for the NWT

Ongoing goals of our Committee that are explicitly included in our mandate are:

- The comprehensive overview of the GNWT's budget and fiscal framework
- The consideration of Bills, budgets and financial management of the Department of the Executive (including the Executive Offices, the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, and the Financial Management Board Secretariat), and the Department of Finance
- Examination of Auditor General's reports
- Examination of the reports of statutory officers including the Commissioner of Official Languages, the Conflict of Interest Commissioner, the Information and Privacy Commissioner, the Equal Pay Commissioner and the Human Rights Commission
- Coordination of House Business scheduling and planning in cooperation with Cabinet.

CONCLUSION

The Committee has a full agenda and a great deal of work ahead of it in order to fulfill our mandate. We look forward to working with the Government to advance the vision and goals we set out together as the 15th Assembly, and the more specific priorities and objectives we have identified as a Committee.